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Meditations on the Beatitudes

By
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MEDITATIONS ON THE TEN COMMANDMENTS



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MEDITATIONS ON THE
BEATITUDES

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Preface

Few passages of the Bible have brought to the hearts of men through the centuries the inspiration of the magnificent strains of the Beatitudes with which the Sermon on the Mount opens.

The Beatitudes are at once simple and sublime. In them there are phrases of wonderful grace and poetic beauty. But far more important, there is a summons to a noble way of life on earth, and to sonship in the family of God.

It is easy to be caught in the coils of selfishness and sophistication. It is not difficult to accept aggression and acquisitiveness as guiding forces in life. It is simple to become a contented spectator rather than a courageous participant in the struggle for righteousness. But no thoughtful meditation on the great truths of the Beatitudes will leave one complacent and contented. To place these teachings at the very center of one's life is to have a moral and spiritual experience that will give new and decisive direction and meaning to life. Then one may say, "Whereas I was blind, now I see."

Many of the rich and beautiful passages of the Bible have been woven into these meditations.

Herbert V. Prochnow

The Beatitudes

Blessed are the poor in spirit:

For their's is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they that mourn:

For they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek:

For they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst
after righteousness:

For they shall be filled.

Blessed are the merciful:

For they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart:

For they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers:

For they shall be called the children of God.

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for their's is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad:

For great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

The First Beatitude

Blessed are the poor in spirit: for
their's is the kingdom of heaven

The First Beatitude

My son, thou art not without wisdom. Thou knowest that the days of man are often full of trouble. Thou understandest that in life men and women and children sometimes experience adversity, great need, and even calamity. Inwardly they cherish the hope that hardships may not long endure, that somehow they may not suffer too greatly.

It would be well, my son, to realize that life may also hold for thee, as it does for many of thy brothers over the world, hardships under which thou wilt grow faint and weary. Life may deal harshly with thee. Thou mayest fail utterly to attain the goals thou hast set in life. Serious sickness may befall thee. Thou mayest be hungry and naked. The goods of this world which thou hast obtained by honest toil may all be taken from thee, and thou mayest find thyself poverty-stricken. In thy adversity thou mayest even be persecuted for thy loyalty to God, thy Father.

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Jesus hath said that blessed are those who are humble and poor in spirit and who find in God their true strength.

Thou mayest, my son, be a pauper, and yet be the instrument of bringing great blessings to men. Thou mayest not possess as much as a penny, and yet possess all things, even the kingdom of heaven.

If thou art poor in spirit thou art a child of God, and through thee, my beloved son, God will extend his kingdom in the world.

In olden times those who were poor in worldly goods were sometimes persecuted for their faith in God, but their loyalty to the Father was never shaken. They were poor in goods, and humble and poor in spirit. But they were rich in faith.

The poor have often been hated even of their own neighbors, but many have remained true to their God even in hardship. They have been faithful to God Almighty who is the Maker of both the rich and the poor.

Only when thou hast come to know Jesus hast thou known the great example of one who was poor in spirit. Only he that humbleth himself like Jesus is really poor in spirit. Only such a man shall be exalted and inherit the kingdom of heaven. God forgetteth not the cry of the humble.

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What doth the Lord require of thee, my son? Only to walk humbly with thy God. If thou wouldest be poor in spirit, let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. Being found in the fashion of man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

My son, dost thou remember when Jesus knew that the hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father and that He was come from God? Rememberest thou that Jesus rose from supper, and laid aside His garments? Then He took a towel and girded Himself. After that He poureth water into a basin, began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded.

Jesus said unto His disciples, "Ye call me Master and Lord and ye say well; for so I am. If I, then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Only if thou, my son, canst become poor and lowly in spirit, and humble like Jesus, mayest thou inherit the kingdom of heaven.

If thou art poor in spirit, thou wilt look only

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to God, thy Father, for strength and guidance. Thou wilt seek only to do His will each hour of the day as thou goest about the work He hath given thee the strength and wisdom to perform. When thou hast done thy work well, thou wilt thank God from whom all thy blessings have come. No pride nor arrogancy will come from thy mouth. For men to search their own glory is no glory. God forbid that thou shouldest glory save in the cross of Jesus Christ.

The Lord hath respect unto the lowly and the poor in spirit. The proud he knoweth afar off. Everyone that is not lowly in spirit but is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord. Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall. Him that hath an high look and a proud heart the Lord will not suffer.

My son, when thou hast attained wisdom thou knowest that the honors of this world are empty. Many walk in the Lord who mind earthly things and whose end is their destruction. Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on earth. Friendship of the world is enmity with God. If thou, my son, lovest the world, the love of the Father is not in thee.

My son, thou mayest be given riches and

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wealth with which thou canst do great good. But remember that it is not easy to be poor in spirit when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and hast dwelt therein. It becometh so easy to place thy trust in riches. Beware lest thou forget the Lord God. Life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which thou possessest.

Thy wealth may make thee many friends in this world. Every man is a friend to him that giveth gifts. But when thou diest thou shalt go alone, and shalt carry nothing away with thee. Naked shalt thou return to the earth. Nothing of thy labour wilt thou have with thee. They that are rich may so easily fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. My son, lay not up for yourself treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourself treasures in heaven. Be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God. If thou hast riches, have mercy on the poor. Do justice to the afflicted and needy. If thou hast the world's goods and shutteth up the bowels of compassion from thy brother who hath need, how dwelleth the love of God in thee? He that giveth unto the poor shall not

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Thou wilt remember the Pharisee who went up into the Temple to pray. He thanked God that he was not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as the publican who also had come to pray. The publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, "God be merciful to me a sinner." My son, thou knowest that Christ said this humble publican went down to his house justified rather than the Pharisee. The publican was not proud in spirit, but poor in spirit. He that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

Blessed, my son, art thou if thou art poor in spirit, for thine is the greatest gift of all, the kingdom of heaven.

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lack. When thou givest a cup of water in His name, thou shalt not lose thy reward. Give, and it shall be given unto you, good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over. My son, God loveth a cheerful giver.

When thy flesh crieth for riches, remember that Jesus was born in a manger with the oxen. When thy greed driveth thee for more of the world's goods, remember that Jesus knew not where to lay His head. When thy ambition leadeth thee to make the treasures of this world thy hope, remember Jesus was nailed to a wooden cross.

My son, thou must understand that neither poverty nor riches are good or evil in themselves. If thou art poor, thou mayest find it easier to be humble and poor in spirit. But poverty in this world's goods doth not assure thee that thou wilt be poor in spirit. If thou hast been blest with wealth, thou mayest find it more difficult to be humble and poor in spirit; but thou canst use thy wealth to bless many, and seeing thy brothers' need show compassion unto them. Then wilt thou with thy wealth be poor in spirit and the love of God will dwell in thee.

If thou art poor in spirit, thou wilt confess daily to thy Father how weak are thy flesh and thy heart. Thou wilt commit thyself and thy life

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completely to God. When thou art afraid, thou wilt trust in God. When thy soul fainteth within thee, thou wilt remember the Lord. When thou art brought low, thou wilt know that a loving Father preserveth the faithful. When thou comest to God, thou must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. The living God is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe. My son, the Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and He knoweth them that trust in Him. Blessed is that man that maketh the Lord his trust. All things are possible to him.

Make no mistake, my son, the humble and poor in spirit are not cowards, or weak, or simple. They are not without strength and courage. They are strong and of good courage. They are steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as they know that their labor is not in vain in the Lord. Their hands have not been weak and their knees have not been feeble in the face of ridicule, persecution and even death. They have no fear of them which kill the body but are not able to kill the soul. God is their salvation. In Him they trust and are not afraid. Fear not, my son, what man shall do unto thee. Thou canst do all things through Christ that strengtheneth thee.

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Blessed, my son, art thou if thou art poor in spirit, for thine is the greatest gift of all, the kingdom of heaven.

The Second Beatitude

Blessed are they that mourn: for
they shall be comforted.

The Second Beatitude

My son, there are those who believe that Jesus hath meant that those who mourn for their sins and transgressions and for the sins and transgressions of others are blessed.

There are those who believe that Jesus hath meant also that those who sorrow and grieve because of bodily affliction, earthly suffering, the injustices of men and governments, and the cruel oppression and hatreds of wars are blessed in their mourning and shall be comforted.

We need know only that Jesus hath said simply, "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted." Jesus hath known that the iniquities of men separate them from God and it hath grieved Him. He hath known also that all of us, my son, have sinned, and have come short of the glory of God.

Therefore Jesus hath said in this beatitude that blessed and happy are they who feel deeply in their hearts their sins and their brothers' sins,

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and who mourn over the iniquities of man. They mourn when they see men greedy of gain, covetous of their neighbor's possessions, seeking position and power for themselves, and talking with exceeding pride and with arrogancy coming out of their mouths.

They mourn as they see men trust in chariots, because they are many; and in horsemen, because they are very strong. They mourn now as they see mankind trust in atom bombs because their destruction is great. It were better for men if they would beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks.

They mourn when they see hatred, bitterness and wrath among men. They mourn when they see men draw nigh to God with their mouth, and honor Him with their lips, but their heart is far from Him. They mourn when they see men cry, Lord, Lord, but do not the things which He hath taught them through Jesus Christ.

It would be well for thee, my son, if thou wouldst weep and lament when they beholdest thy sins and the iniquities of men. Thou mightest well cover thyself with sack cloth and in thy sorrow cry mightily to God. Such sorrow will work repentance in thy heart.

As thou beholdest thy sins, turn thou to the forgiving Father with all thy heart and with

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weeping and mourning. Turn to the Lord: say unto Him, take away mine iniquity for I grieve over my sins. Thy Father will have mercy upon thee and He will abundantly pardon.

My son, thou wilt not live life without affliction and suffering. Trouble and anguish may pursue thee in life. Thou mayest be tossed with the tempests of life and be torn in body and mind. In this world thou mayest have much tribulation and pain.

Thou mayest mourn over thy many afflictions and the sufferings of thy flesh. But thou mayest use thy sufferings for good. First, thou wilt with a courageous heart and with faith in God seek to overcome the sufferings and hardships which come to thee in life. Nevertheless, if this is not possible, thou canst with God's help use these sufferings to bless thy life and the lives of others. Thy neighbor who also suffers will take courage as he sees thee doing thy best and patiently and humbly using thy afflictions as the means of knowing thy God better. It is well for thee to know that many men have come to God through their suffering.

My son when thou dost mourn for thy sins and thy brothers' sins and when thou dost use the sadnesses and afflictions of life as the means of serving the Father, the Lord will sustain thee.

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Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning. The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms. A broken and suffering body may be the instrument by which thou and thy neighbors are brought to repentance and to God. In thy suffering thou mayest say with the psalmist from the bottom of thy heart, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted."

The Father will not leave thee comfortless; he will come to thee. Through thy faith and trust in the Father thou wilt find comfort in thy suffering and affliction. Those who sorrow not may never know the healing comfort of the Father. In the day when thou criest, the Lord will answer thee and strengthen thee.

Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. The Lord upholdeth all that fall and raiseth up all those that be bowed down. All things work together for good to them that love God.

When thou hast had great hardship and adversity, thy Father hath also felt thy hardship and adversity as one of his beloved children. Remember always, my son, that sickness, affliction and trouble may be the means of thy understanding better the difficulties and sorrows of

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thy neighbor. Thus they may open thy heart and bring thee nearer to God. Through thy distress and affliction he hath made thee more Christ-like. By sadness the heart is made better. We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God. Thou mayest remember long the afflictions and misery of thy life, and thy remembrance may work in thee a humility and sympathy for thy brothers which the Lord God loveth. Glory in thy tribulations for they work patience in thee.

If thou believest thy suffering is great, remember Jesus as he cried, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt."

When thou art, perhaps with suffering, in the last moments of thy life, thou wilt know that the Father is near thee in death as thou hearest His Son say, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. Sorrow and mourning shall flee.

God will comfort all who mourn. He will give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy

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for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. He will turn thy mourning into joy and comfort thee.

Those who mourn may cry out, sing, O heavens; and be joyful O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains: for the Lord hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted.

Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted with God.

My son, endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. As one whom his mother comforteth, so will God comfort thee. Tribulation, distress, or persecution shall not separate thee from the love of Christ. He will heal thy broken heart and bind up thy wounds. If thou art tried in the furnace of affliction, endure, I beseech thee, thy afflictions with a Christ-like spirit. The compassions of the Lord God Almighty never, never fail.

The Third Beatitude

Blessed are the meek: for they shall
inherit the earth.

The Third Beatitude

My son, I ask thee to search thy heart and ask thyself if thou really believest the words of Jesus when he said, "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth." Everywhere men refuse to believe that the meek shall inherit the earth. Armed power and ruthless might seem to stride across the pages of history. Selfishness and greed so often seem to have complete control of the hearts and minds of men.

How often hast thou heard it said that one has no self-respect if he permits another to injure him? How often hath it been said that one must maintain his dignity at all costs? How few there are who do not believe themselves superior to many others because of race, creed, wealth, nationality, social position, education, or for some other reason. They seem wholly to forget that everyone that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord.

Pride, conceit and boasting are not little

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known sins. They are embraced on every hand by men of all nations and races, by the rich and the poor, the educated and the illiterate. Many men will proclaim everyone his own goodness and his own wisdom. And yet if thou seest a man wise in his own conceit, thou shouldest know that there is more hope of a fool than of him.

In this Beatitude Jesus hath repeated the words of the psalmist who hath said earlier, "The meek shall inherit the earth." Jesus here hath clearly confirmed the words of the psalmist of old.

My son, I would have thee understand fully what Jesus meant by meekness. The meek are not the weak. They are the truly strong who willingly bear the suffering of others and the heavy burdens of mankind. The meek are not the cowardly in the face of danger. They are the courageous and fearless.

When thy brother doth injure thee unjustly, canst thou be kind and good to him, long-suffering in the face of injustice? When thy brother hath great success and attaineth fame and position, while the work of thy hands is a failure in the world, canst thou share in the joy of thy brother's success? If thy neighbor receiveth much wealth, dost thou rejoice with him? If thy neighbor smitteth thee unjustly, canst thou turn

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the other cheek and not seek revenge? If thou canst do these things, thou hast begun to understand the full meaning of meekness.

If thou hast had the great privilege of education, dost thou use it to minister to thy fellow men or solely to thy own gain, looking down snobbishly upon those who are less intellectual? Art thou constantly concerned lest men overlook thy rights and fail to pay thee the respect of thy position? When thy neighbor falleth, doth it cause thee outwardly to express sorrow but inwardly to rejoice that now thou mayest more easily excel him in position, wealth and the esteem of the world?

When thou searchest for the meaning of meekness in all its breadth and beauty, thou canst seek no further or higher than the life of Christ. It was Christ who said take my yoke upon you, and learn of me: for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. Christ alone left us the supreme example of a life of meekness. It was meekness so noble and sublime that it sought no vengeance, returned no insults, and injured no enemy. It was meekness so great that it would suffer crucifixion on a cross for mankind and ask forgiveness for those who crucified Him. It was meekness expressed in patience, forbearance and love.

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One with the lowliness and meekness of Christ could not himself enjoy the material blessings of this world while other men hungered and were in need. One with the lowliness and meekness of Christ could not struggle for position and power so that he might control the lives of his fellow men. One with the lowliness and meekness of Christ could not find lasting joy in his own economic security if his brothers were not secure.

My son, it is not enough to be industrious, thrifty, just, temperate, honest, merciful and considerate. Meekness is an indispensable requirement of a Christ-like life. It is meekness that helps to make saints of sinners.

Meekness will make thee forgive when thou mightest seek revenge. Meekness will make thee suffer an injustice lest someone else be injured. Meekness will destroy thy pride and thy selfishness. With meekness one does not look down on others; he looks down on himself and his sins.

How long must it take for men to learn that meekness of spirit is the only foundation upon which the peace of nations can be built. If the earth and the oceans could give up their war dead, how many tens of millions could testify that only meekness—and not force, violence and hatred—is the foundation upon which the City of God can be built. How are the mighty fallen

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in the midst of battle. It is written that all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. The meek, and not those who seek revenge or those who commit violence, shall finally inherit the earth. Meekness is the foundation stone upon which a Christ-like life is built.

Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry: for anger resteth in the bosom of fools. Be slow to wrath. The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. All bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor and evil-speaking should be put away from you with all malice. Wrath bringeth forth strife. Let not the sun go down upon thy wrath.

Anger, bitterness, greed and hatred bring strife and war. Only the humble and the meek provide the way to peace. Only those of this mind put on the bowels of mercy, kindness, humbleness, meekness and longsuffering. Only they have compassion one of another, loving as brethren.

The meek glory not in their wisdom, nor in their might nor riches. In lowliness of mind they esteem others better than themselves. They are servants of the weak. They seek only to do the will of the Father. They alone shall finally build the City of God on earth.

My son, thou wilt find it exceedingly difficult to be meek in the world and at the same time to

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be looked upon with approval by men. Pride is a virtue in the eyes of the world. To turn the other cheek is looked upon by men as cowardice. To bless them that curse you is considered idealistic foolishness. To do good to them that hate you is said to be a fool's waste of time.

If thou dost with all thy heart live a life of meekness, love and humility, there are times when thou mayest be a sheep in the midst of wolves. Thou mayest even seem to be a sheep for the slaughter. Thou mayest often find thy strength small and thy heart broken. But if thou art brought low, thy Father will help thee. If thou dost suffer among men because of thy humility and meekness, remember thou art a partaker of Christ's sufferings. If thou dost suffer with Him, thou shalt finally reign with Him.

The road of humility will lead thee to the throne of God.

The Fourth Beatitude

Blessed are they which do hunger
and thirst after righteousness: for they
shall be filled.

The Fourth Beatitude

My son ask thyself one question: Dost thou really desire above all else in thy life to be righteous—to live a life of goodness? Is this thy great goal? Thou dost in all probability desire many things in the world. But what dost thou place first in thy life? For what dost thou hunger and thirst deep in thy heart? Is it for goods and wealth? Position? Fame? Ease? Happiness? Health? For what art thou most willing to give thy time and thy life? Meditate thoughtfully on what thou desirest most.

Jesus did not say in this Beatitude, "Blessed are the righteous," although he might so have spoken. But these words would have brought little comfort and joy to us, for we know we sin often and we are not righteous. God knoweth our foolishness and our sins are not hid from Him. How many, Oh God, are our iniquities and our sins? If God Almighty shouldest mark our iniquities, who should stand? All of us like

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sheep have gone astray. We have turned every one to his own way. All of us have sinned grievously and have come short of the glory of God. My son, if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

In this Beatitude Jesus said, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness." Here Jesus hath said that thou art blessed if thou dost hunger and thirst after righteousness. These words are words of comfort and joy to sinners. Thou art blessed if thy soul thirsteth for God, for the living God. Thou art blessed if thou canst say that there is none upon earth that thou desirest beside the living God. Thou art blessed if thy soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord, if thy heart and thy flesh cry out for the living God.

If thou dost hunger and thirst after righteousness, thou shalt be filled. The promise is clear. The answer is complete. Those who hunger and thirst after righteousness shall be filled. The Lord wilt bless the righteous. The Lord knoweth the days of the upright: and their inheritance shall be for ever. Mark well the righteous man, for the end of that man is peace. Righteousness and peace are inseparable. When we walk in the ways of righteousness, our feet are guided in the paths of peace.

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When we walk in the way of good men and keep the paths of the righteous, we seek whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely and whatsoever things are of good report. We follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. The fruits of a righteous life are love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, temperance.

The Lord will withhold no good thing from him who walketh uprightly and is righteous. Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that hunger and thirst after righteousness and that love Him.

All men—the rich, the poor, the educated, the uneducated, the leaders, the masses—may hunger and thirst after righteousness. But remember well, my son, that others can not hunger and thirst after righteousness for thee. No one can substitute for thee. Thou canst not say to another, I beg thee to hunger and thirst after righteousness for me as I am too busy with the affairs of life. Thou, and thou alone, my son, canst so hunger and so thirst for righteousness for thyself. Thou alone must seek righteousness and serve thy God with a perfect heart and with

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a willing mind. Thou must serve thy Father in righteousness all the days of thy life. Thou must present thy body a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is thy reasonable service. Jesus went about doing good, doing his Father's business. So must thou also go about working good, and clothing thy life with righteousness.

Righteousness is not something which is left solely for the poor to seek. It is not something left for the less important to seek while those who are busy with the significant affairs of life tend to the world's business. Thy soul must thirst alone for God. Thou must be able to say, as the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. Thou must be able to say, I have longed for thy salvation, O Lord.

From the beginning of time men have sought wealth, pleasure, fame. After these things do men still hunger and thirst. These are the things which seem good. These are the things men tell themselves are right. But the end thereof is death.

No man can seek first both righteousness and the things of the world. Each day we choose that which we will seek first. Sometimes we say, Lord, I will seek righteousness, but first I hunger and thirst for the goods and pleasures of the world. First I hunger for position and fame.

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Then, O Lord, shall I seek righteousness first. But, my son, what doth it profit thee to labor for the wind?

Stand fast in the Lord. Yield thyself to righteousness. Walk worthy of God daily. As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the Sons of God. Let your heart therefore be perfect with the Lord our God, to walk in his statutes and to keep His commandments.

The fountains of worldly goods, worldly pleasures and worldly fame do not fill men. He that loveth silver and gold findeth not his thirst quenched, but seeketh more and more. He that loveth the world's goods also desireth constantly more. So also he that seeketh pleasures findeth no lasting satisfaction. Whosoever drinketh water from these fountains shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that Christ giveth shall never thirst; but the water that Christ giveth him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. It is for thee to say, Father, give me of this water that I may never thirst again.

Christ hath said in this Beatitude that if thou dost hunger and thirst after righteousness thou shalt be filled. Jesus is the bread of life. He that cometh to Him shall never hunger. He that believeth on Him shall never thirst. Jesus hath

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declared that if any man thirst, he should come unto Jesus and drink.

If thou dost hunger and thirst after righteousness, my son, thou wilt cry with David, "O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land where no water is. . . . Because thy lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee. Thus will I bless thee while I live: I will lift up my hands in thy name."

And now, my son, I pray that thou wilt hunger and thirst after righteousness and that God may make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight.

The Fifth Beatitude

Blessed are the merciful: for they
shall obtain mercy.

The Fifth Beatitude

In olden times the psalmist said that the Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. The Lord hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear Him. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him. For He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust. The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him, and His righteousness unto children's children; to such as keep His covenant, and to those that remember His commandments to do them.

Even before these words of the psalmist, thou wilt remember, my son, that it was revealed unto Moses that the Lord, the Lord God, is merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thou-

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sands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin.

The people had been commanded even earlier than the days when Jesus was among them to show mercy to their fellow men. If a poor neighbor gave his raiment in pledge of a payment, it was to be returned by sun down, for it was the raiment wherein he slept. The corners of the field, the gleanings of the harvest and some grapes in the vineyard were to be left for the poor. Should an enemy's ox go astray, it should be brought back to him again. Should his beast of burden fall under his burden, he should be helped.

In the days before Christ taught the great blessings of mercy and the forgiveness of the sins of one's neighbors, men were also commanded to rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth. Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me: I will render to the man according to his work. They were likewise taught that if thine enemy be hungry, he should be given bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, he should be given water to drink. Love and mercy were to guide men constantly. It was written in the centuries before Christ that thou shalt love the Lord thy

The Fifth Beatitude

God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. It was also written thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

Jesus hath many times said that men must be merciful one to another. You will remember, my son, when He spoke these words—Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful. Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven. For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Thou wilt remember also that Jesus said when the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory. On that Judgment Day there shall be gathered before Him all nations. He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats. And He shall say to them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you. For I was hungered and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in. Naked, and ye clothed me. Listen carefully, my

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son, as He telleth thee how thou mayest show mercy. I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

Thou wilt likewise remember that the righteous said unto Christ, when saw we Thee an hungered, and fed Thee? or thirsty, and gave Thee drink? When saw we Thee a stranger, and took Thee in? or naked and clothed Thee? Or when saw we Thee sick, or in prison, and came unto Thee? Then Jesus said the King would say unto those who had so shown mercy and kindness; "Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto Me."

There are many in the world who are hungry, thirsty, naked, sick, in prison, tired, discouraged and desperately in need of thy mercy and love. When thou showest love and mercy to even the least of these, thou art showing it to Christ.

Let no man say he understandeth not how he may show mercy, for Jesus hath repeatedly told us. A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among thieves which took his raiment, wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. A priest and a Levite passed by on the other side. Each day we pass by on the other side of the road when men are hungry, sick and needy. They may be living in filth and

The Fifth Beatitude

dirt. Our hands are too clean to touch them, and our garments must not be soiled. They live in other neighborhoods, and we seldom see them. They live in other countries, and are fortunately far from us. Are there no poor houses to take care of them? Are there no charities? It may even be their own fault that they are wounded and bleeding by the side of the road, and we would not make the mistake of showing mercy without a careful investigation.

But a certain Samaritan saw the wounded man, bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine. Then he set the man on his own beast, brought him to an inn and took care of him. On the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence and gave them to the inn keeper, asking him to take care of the wounded man. The Samaritan also said to the inn keeper that if he should spend more taking care of the man, he would repay him. Jesus said the Good Samaritan had shown mercy and we should do likewise.

In the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Ephesians he wrote, be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children. The Father in His great love showeth mercy to his children. His children ought surely to walk

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in love and show mercy to their brothers. The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him. Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart. Keep mercy and judgment, and wait on the Lord continually.

As thou walkest day by day, month by month, and year by year through life, my son, keep the light of mercy always burning in thy heart. Through that light in thee men may come to see Jesus.

Even when Jesus was brought to Calvary where they crucified Him, He could find deep in His heart these words of mercy, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

The Sixth Beatitude

Blessed are the pure in heart: for
they shall see God.

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The Sixth Beatitude

In this Beatitude it is said that those who are pure in heart are to be given heaven's greatest reward—they shall see God. Lest thou thinkest, my son, that this is a simple requirement, easy of accomplishment, meditate carefully on the words of Jesus.

Jesus said the pure in heart. Jesus did not say that if men think well of thee thou shalt see God. He did not say that if thou art respectable, if thou art looked upon as a person of good morals, and if thou art known as one who conducts his life, his profession and his business on high standards, thou shalt see God. Men sometimes become confused on these things. So often they believe that these outward aspects of life are the real requirements which must be met for those who shall see God. But, make no mistake, thou mayest follow all the rules of conduct and all regulations and customs of men, strictly and

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carefully, and yet not be pure in heart. Thy inner life and thy character must be pure.

Only God can make thee pure in heart. First, as Jesus hath declared in these Beatitudes, thou must be poor in spirit and mourn over thy sins, in meekness thou must hunger and thirst after righteousness, and show mercy to men.

The psalmist had written before the time of Jesus that he that hath clean hands and a pure heart shall ascend into the hill of the Lord and shall stand in His holy place. In the Psalms it was also written that the righteous Lord loveth righteousness; his countenance doth behold the upright. Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart. In the Epistle of Paul to the Hebrews, it is said that there are two great ideals for the Christian—peace with all men, and holiness or consecration—without which no man shall see the Lord.

My son, thou must actively seek holiness. Thou must consecrate thy whole life. Thou must be pure in heart if thou art to see God. Meditate thoughtfully on the words of the psalmist when he asked God to have mercy upon him, to blot out his transgressions, to wash him thoroughly from his iniquity and to cleanse him from his sin. His sin was ever before him. Then the psalmist made a profound confession when he

The Sixth Beatitude

said that he hath sinned against God. So often men think they sin merely against other men. But the psalmist hath uttered a great truth. All sin is against God. Mark these words, my son, deep in thy heart—all sin is against God. Each day as thou goest about thy work and as thou meetest temptation, remember thy sin is sin against God, always against God. When thou injurest thy neighbor, thou sinnest against God. When thou failest to help those who are in need, thou failest to help God. When thou dost covet thy neighbor's goods, his home, and his position, thou art sinning against God.

The psalmist hath also cried, "hide thy face, Father, from my sins and blot out mine iniquities," and then in one of the noblest and greatest prayers of the Old Testament he hath earnestly implored his Lord—"Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." He sought not merely forgiveness of his sins by the Father, great as that would have been. He asked God to perform in him an act of creation such as brought the world into being. He beseeched the Father to create within him a clean heart. He wished the Father by his creative power would cleanse him and could give him a clean, pure heart. Following the rules of conduct which men establish is not enough for those who

Meditations on the Beatitudes

seek a pure heart. Only God through his power as the Creator can give man a clean heart. And only the pure in heart shall see God.

My son, let not the esteem of thy neighbor, the opinions of millions of men and women, or the solemn pronouncements of powerful governments mislead you. The esteem of thy neighbor may be ill-founded. The multitude could crucify Christ. Many governments throughout history have plundered from their neighbors. When sin meets with worldly success, men often applaud. The millions roar their approval of the mighty and not the meek. Governments that boast of their power and not of their purity of heart are acclaimed by the masses. Let not these things deceive you. Nations as well as men are often whited sepulchres which appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones and of all uncleanness. Remember always, only the pure in heart shall finally see God. It is inwardly, in the heart, that men and nations must be pure.

This Beatitude doth not say that if thou hast an education so that men call thee learned and a scholar distinguished among the thinkers of all ages that thou art therefore pure in heart, or that thou shalt see God. It doth not say that if

The Sixth Beatitude

thou art a great and respected leader of men because of thy achievements in business, in government, in industry or in any other field that thou art therefore pure in heart, or that thou shalt see God. It doth not say if thou art working for reforms that many men call good for thy community, thy state or thy nation, that thou art therefore pure in heart, or that thou shalt see God. Only the pure in heart, the inwardly pure, shall see God.

Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour. Jesus is the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in Him, though he were dead, yet shall he live. He loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood. He hath made us kings and priests unto God, the Father. Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. We believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved. Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered. He that heareth the word of Jesus and believeth

Meditations on the Beatitudes

on Him that sent Jesus, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. Wait on the Father continually. Turn to the Lord; say unto Him, take away all iniquity, and receive me Father. Except thou repentest, thou shalt perish. Like the prodigal son, thou shouldest say, I will arise and go to my Father, and will say unto Him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before Thee. Deep in thy heart thou shouldest cry, God be merciful to me a sinner.

Declare now thine iniquity; repent of thy sins. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. When Jesus saw their faith, He said, thy sins be forgiven thee. Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, for his inner life is cleansed. His heart is pure, and he who is pure in heart shall see God.

The Seventh Beatitude

Blessed are the peacemakers: for they
shall be called the children of God.

The Seventh Beatitude

My son, it is one of the great tragedies of human history that men in all nations who have professed faith in God and His Son, Jesus Christ, have in century after century on the battle fields denied that all men were brothers and that they were the children of the same loving Father.

How it must grieve the heart of the Father as He sees His beloved children struggle to take each other's lives, mutilate, maim and disable countless millions created in His image, and burn and destroy each other's churches, homes, factories and fields. In the deadly struggle of war, falsehood, deception and theft become virtues.

Surely men can have faith that this need not always be. Surely they can believe that God is not the author of confusion, but of peace. Surely a man can believe in his heart that there ought to be no strife between me and thee, for we are brothers.

Meditations on the Beatitudes

With our lips we say that thou shalt not kill. With our lips we solemnly profess our faith that God is the Father of all men. We even repeat as a part of the foundation of our faith the words of Jesus when he said that you must love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you. If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink. If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. All these things do we know, Father. All these things do we profess to believe. But all these things we forget and deny in the heat of anger and contention and strife.

We know that he that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city. It is the glory of a nation as well as of a man to pass over a transgression. But the tragic record of history reveals that nations repeatedly glory not in passing over transgressions, but in revenging, full measure and heaping over, the transgressions of other nations. They refuse, or shall it be said they forget, to be merciful as they desire their Father to be merciful. They talk with exceeding pride and arrogance. O mighty little man, why boastest thou thyself in war with what in thy

The Seventh Beatitude

heart thou knowest is the mischief of sin. So often men follow not after the things which make for peace.

Men so often find joy in their displays of might and power, although it hath been said that all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. They forget that we all have one Father. They forget that one God hath created us. One is our Master, even Christ. All of ye are brethren. Ye are members one of another. It is not sufficient, my son, merely to be a lover of peace. It is not enough merely to favor peace, but to be inactive. One cannot sit with arms folded, failing to take his part in the responsibility of helping to bring peace among men. Christ said the peacemakers, that is, those who do the things necessary to make peace, are blessed. They are working actively in the spirit and teachings of Christ to bring peace to a world of turmoil and strife. They are the children of God. They are doers of the word and not hearers only.

Nations as well as men would do well to remember to bear one another's burdens and thus fulfill the law of Christ. The leaders and peoples of nations must never forget that he that loveth not his brother abideth in death. How can nations cry, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which Christ has declared? If a man say, he

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loveth God, and yet hateth his brother, we have been told that he is a liar. What must also be true of a nation whose people say they love God, and yet hate God's children who live in another nation.

It is as certain that war will finally end as that day follows night. Then garments rolled in blood shall be for burning and for fuel of fire. Then the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness shall be quietness and assurance for ever. In that day the Prince of Peace shall lead the Father's children and of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end. All evil doers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth. For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be. But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace. Then there shall be peace on earth, and good will among men.

Jesus also said unto men, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you." These things Jesus spoke unto us that we might in Him have peace. God hath called us to peace. The peace of God is to rule in our hearts. My son, we are to be of one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel, walking by the same rule, having compassion one of another, love as brethren.

The Seventh Beatitude

Jesus hath taught thee, my son, when thou prayest to say, Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven. And thou believest that the will of God will therefore finally be done on earth as it is in heaven. Thou believest therefore that love and peace will reign among men. But thou must follow each day in thy life the things that make for peace. Never forget that it has been said again and again that God is the God of peace. Christ is the Prince of Peace.

From whence come wars and fightings among men? Come they not even of the lusts that war in men? Men lust, and have not: they kill and desire to have, and cannot obtain. They fight and war, yet they have not, because they ask not. Men ask, and receive not, because they ask amiss, that they may consume it upon their lusts. We profess that we believe in Christ, but we refuse to practice his teachings. We forget that friendship with the world is enmity with God. The world says in war that thou must hate thine enemy. Christ said thou must always love him. The world says in war thou must do evil to thine enemy. Christ says thou must do good to him. Whosoever therefore followeth the wisdom of the world is the enemy of God. If thine enemy despitefully use you and persecute you, pray for him. Forgive him of his trespasses. If men love

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their enemies, their reward shall be great, and they shall be the children of God, the Father of all men and of all nations. My son, these are exceedingly difficult teachings and the tragic record of history is that men and nations have professed them but have never accepted them.

A complete and abiding faith in Jesus means complete faith that finally men will love their neighbors as themselves. Love is of God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. Love worketh no ill to one's neighbor.

Should thy heart ever be filled with bitterness and hatred against God's children in another land, forget not that it is the peacemakers who shall be called the children of God.

The Eighth Beatitude

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for their's is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

The Eighth Beatitude

My son, if thou dost try earnestly to live thy life in keeping with Christ's teachings in the Beatitudes, thou knowest it may not go well with thee in the world.

The poor in spirit, they that mourn, the meek, and they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness often walk alone in the world. The merciful, the pure in heart and the peacemakers frequently find no friends. The wicked bend their bow, they make ready their arrow upon the string, that they may privily shoot at the upright in heart. He that is upright is abomination to the wicked.

The world loveth its own, but if thou livest not as the world, the world hateth thee. But if the world hate thee, know that it hated Christ before it hated thee. All that will live Godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

Thou wilt remember that the apostles were beaten and were commanded that they should

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not speak in the name of Jesus. Then they were let go. They departed rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer for the name of Jesus. And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ. They knew in their hearts that even if they had to suffer for Christ, they would finally also reign with Him.

When all men speak well of thee, my son, there is great danger that thou hast accepted the ways of the world and not the teachings of Christ in the Beatitudes. Friendship of the world is enmity with God. Thou wilt remember that when Christ lived His life so it conformed to the Beatitudes, and did not conform to the world, men cried, "Crucify Him, crucify Him."

The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is the good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on earth.

Fear not if thou dost lose the friendship of this world, for Christ said that if thou art persecuted for righteousness' sake,—*for righteousness' sake*—the kingdom of heaven shall be thine. Thou mayest in thy heart take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecu-

The Eighth Beatitude

tions, in distresses for Christ's sake. All who live Godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

Thou knowest that temptation of all kinds is on all sides of thee as thou walkest through life. Pride, greed, infidelity, conceit, selfishness, boasting, vanity, ambition for power, position and wealth, all call loudly to thee. They seem to offer such great rewards here and now. To a fool it may even seem a sport to do mischief. Thou mayest say to thyself that thou wilt sin but a little. Thou wilt sin without others being aware of it. Stolen waters seem sweeter to thee. Bread eaten in secret seems more pleasant. But remember that when a man taketh fire in his bosom, his clothes will be burned. He that pursueth evil pursueth it to his death. Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. He that keepeth the commandments and teachings of God keepeth his own soul, but he that despiseth His ways shall die. If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die.

My son, thou must follow daily in thy life all the Beatitudes which Jesus taught. It is not enough to be poor in spirit but not to be pure in heart. It is not enough to be meek and yet not to be a peacemaker. All of the Beatitudes are to be made a part of thy life. Thou must present thy body a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. Thou

Meditations on the Beatitudes

must serve thy God all the days of thy life. Thou must be an example of a Christ-like life, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

Thou knowest, my beloved son, that many of us profess earnestly that we believe in Christ and His teachings, and yet in our hearts we know that we do not live our lives as Jesus taught in the Beatitudes. So often we are not poor in spirit. We are frequently not meek, but we boast and are wise in our own conceit. We do not always hunger and thirst after righteousness, but we pursue evil which holds out the rewards of the world. We are not always merciful, if it means worldly loss to us. We are not pure in heart. We are not peacemakers.

We say to our neighbor, come not near to me, for I am holier than thou. We try to serve two masters: God and mammon. We draw nigh unto God with our mouths and honor Him with our lips, but our hearts are far from Him. We say, but we do not.

All our works we do to be seen of men. We are not leaders for Christ. We fail to follow diligently His Commandments and all the teachings of His Beatitudes. We are blind guides. We strain at gnats and swallow camels.

We do our alms and our works before men to

The Eighth Beatitude

be seen of them. The words of our mouths are smoother than butter and softer than oil, but hatred and malice are in our hearts. We have sinned. We have committed iniquity. All we like sheep have gone astray. All our unrighteousness is sin. And the wages of sin is death.

Too often we are, like the Pharisees, whited sepulchres which indeed appear beautiful outward but are within full of dead men's bones and of uncleanness. We are always ready each one to proclaim his own goodness. We have forgotten that it is not he that commendeth himself who is approved. It is not even he whom the world commendeth who is approved. It is he whom the Lord commendeth who is approved.

We call, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which Christ taught. We justify ourselves before men, but God knoweth our hearts. We profess that we know God but in our works we deny Him. We say that we have fellowship with Him, but we walk in darkness. If a man saith, I know God, but keepeth not His Commandments, the truth is not in him.

My son, if thou art to be blessed, thou must seek God with thy whole heart. Thou must not only hear the word of God in the Commandments, in the Beatitudes, and in the teachings of Christ, but thou must keep the word of God.

Meditations on the Beatitudes

Blessed art thou if thou wilt do His Commandments. Blessed art thou if thou endurest temptation, for when thou art tried thou shalt receive the crown of life. Blessed art thou if thou hast put thy trust in God.

Fear not if thou art hated of all men for the sake of Christ. Be not troubled if thou sufferest for righteousness' sake. Know that thou art then becoming daily more Christ-like. If thou lovest thy life for Christ's sake, thou shalt save it. When men revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for Christ's sake, rejoice and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven.